

By: Sabrina Haney

Local hotels feeling economic pressure

King of Prussia, PA – Hotel employees at the Valley Forge Convention Complex are accustomed to accommodating conferences of anywhere from twenty-five to five thousand guests every weekend. The majority of the guests of the Valley Forge Radisson and Scanticon hotels are business men and women. So, as with many business hotels, when the winter holidays come, the hotel begins to slow down. Staff is thinned out and everyone is unhurried aside from preparing for the occasional holiday party.

However, after the winter holidays of 2008 had ended and the New Year began, the business of the convention complex did not resume as normal. The entire complex has been affected by the current economy as of early 2009 and that lull maintains as the year rolls in to the spring. So, how are the employees of the hotel affected by this semi-permanent respite in business? For the front office, it is the opposite of a generally anticipated outcome. Guest service agents are being overworked.

Generally, a front office shift at the Radisson and Scanticon hotels consist of four front desk agents, two operators, three bellmen, and a manager or two. Though, since the decline in hotel and convention sales, three things have happened to accommodate the economic slump, all part time employees have been denied working hours, three fulltime employees have been laid off and the operations team has been cut almost entirely. Ultimately, the result of the economic recession on this particular staff is that a manager remains on all shifts, but operators have been cut completely and bellman has been reduced significantly. Usually, there are two front desk agents between the two hotels who will answer all incoming phone calls for the Radisson, Scanticon and Convention Center, care for all guest luggage, and continue on in all of their regular duties of the check-in and check-out processes and handling guest issues.

In many instances, employees are working double shifts, six days a week, or are not receiving sufficient breaks. Unfortunately, it is very often that one will hear horror stories on the news about American citizens being laid off from their jobs and about those who are struggling to find work. Nevertheless, for those who are working and taking on the jobs of those whom their companies cannot pay, it seems that the only thing that can be said for them is that they should feel "lucky" for even having a job.